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Saul, An Oratorio

Jennens, Charles

London, 1738

Scene II.

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A C T II. S C E N E I.

C H O R U S.

*ENVY! Eldest-born of Hell!
 Cease in human Breasts to dwell.
 Ever at all Good repining,
 Still the Happy undermining!
 God and Man by thee infested,
 Thou by God and Man detested!
 Most thy self thou dost torment,
 At once the Crime and Punishment.
 Hide thee in the blackest Night:
 Virtue sickens at thy sight!
 Hence, thou Eldest-born of Hell!
 Cease in human Breasts to dwell.*

S C E N E II.

JONATHAN and DAVID.

Jonath. Ah! dearest Friend, undone by too much Virtue!
 Think you, an Evil Spirit was the Cause
 Of all my Father's Rage? It was indeed
 A Spirit of Envy, and of mortal Hate.
 He has resolv'd your Death; and sternly charg'd
 His whole Retinue, me especially,
 To execute his Vengeance.

*But sooner Jordan's Stream, I swear,
 Back to his Spring shall swiftly roll,
 Than I consent to hurt a Hair
 Of thee, thou Darling of my Soul.*



David. O strange Vicissitude ! But Yesterday
He thought me worthy of his Daughter's Love ;
To Day he seeks my Life.

Jonath. My Sister *Merab*, by his own Gift thy Right,
He has bestow'd on *Adriel*.

David. O, my Prince, would that were all !
It would not grieve me much. The scornful Maid
(Didst thou observe ?) with such disdainful Pride
Receiv'd the King's Command ! — but lovely *Michal*,
As mild as she is fair, out-strips all Praise.

*Such haughty Beauties rather move
Aversion, than engage our Love.
They only can our Cares beguile,
Who gently speak, and sweetly smile.
If Virtue in that Dress appear,
Who, that sees, can Love forbear ?*

Jonath. My Father comes. Retire, my Friend, while I
With peaceful Accents try to calm his Rage.

[Exit David.]

SCENE III.

SAUL and JONATHAN.

Saul. Hast thou obey'd my Orders, and destroy'd
My mortal Enemy, the Son of *Jesse* ?

Jonath. Alas, my Father ! He your Enemy ?
Say rather, he has done important Service
To you, and to the Nation ; hazarded
His Life for both, and slain our Giant Foe,
Whose Presence made the boldest of us tremble.

Fin.

